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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MW](#)
SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO ARRESTS 14, INCLUDING THREE U.S.
CITIZENS, IN CONNECTION WITH TERRORISM

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY

Ref: Podgorica-Ops Ctr (Carlson-Kozlowski) e-mail, 9/9/06

This is a Podgorica cable. It has not been cleared with
Embassy Belgrade.

11. (SBU) Summary: On the morning of Saturday, September 9,
at about 10:00 local time, Montenegrin police raided
dwellings in the locality of Tuzi, to the southeast of the
capital Podgorica, in a largely ethnically Albanian
community. Fourteen persons were taken into custody,
including three U.S. citizens. Five others, including at
least two reportedly with U.S. visas, are fugitive. Post
was promptly informed of the arrests by the Government of
Montenegro and by concerned relatives and neighbors of
those arrested. Chief of Montenegro's Police Veselin
Veljovic told post officers that the raid was directed
against a group of Albanian extremists that included
American-Albanians, and seized a large cache of weapons.
Those detained are being arraigned before the local
magistrate on September 11. Opposition parties have called
the timing of the arrests politically-motivated, coming the
day before the parliamentary vote. End summary.

Warning, Surveillance and Prevention

12. (SBU) On September 9, Montenegrin Police Chief Veselin
Veljovic told post officers that his force had acted that
morning to prevent imminent attacks in the Tuzi (Podgorica)
region by Albanian extremists. Police raids on several
dwellings in and around Tuzi had resulted in the seizure of
a large cache of weapons and explosives, reportedly
including Chinese-made automatic- and semi-automatic
weapons, sniper scopes, explosives, bombs, antitank
weapons, Albanian and UCK (Kosovo Liberation Army) flags,
maps, full-face masks, protective vests, and other military
equipment. Material hostile to pro-Government Albanian
politician Ferhat Dinosa was also found. Fourteen persons,
including three U.S. citizens, were arrested; consular
access to the U.S. citizens has been requested, and will be
reported septel. Police said five others, including two
reportedly with U.S. residence permits, fled; post will
forward details as available on the fugitives through U.S.
law enforcement channels. Note: Our information is that
all arrested were Catholic Albanians, not Muslims; about
30% of Montenegro's Albanians are (nominally) Catholic; 70%
are (nominally) Muslim. End note.

3. (SBU) Veljovic said the raid was the culmination of
several months of surveillance, under warrant from the
Supreme State Prosecutor, and informed by data from several
friendly foreign intelligence services. Veljovic said the
group planned to attack police and other Montenegrin

government facilities in and near Tuzi, on Sunday September 10, which was the date of Republic-wide parliamentary elections in Montenegro.

¶4. (SBU) After detention in Podgorica's Security Center (police station), those arrested (including the Americans) are being arraigned before the Basic Court of Podgorica on September 11. Charges will be reported septel. After arraignment, they will be held in the main detention facility at Spuz, Montenegro.

Political Football

¶5. (U) Local opposition politicians reacted harshly to the raid. Leader of the Opposition Predrag Bulatovic (Socialist People's Party- SNP) criticized the raid's timing, one day before Republic-wide parliamentary voting. Movement for Changes (PzP) leader Nebojsa Medojevic voiced similar sentiments. The new Albanian Alternative party said the raid was an unjustified failure and an attempt to intimidate Albanian voters. The GoM rejected allegations that the action was politically motivated.

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